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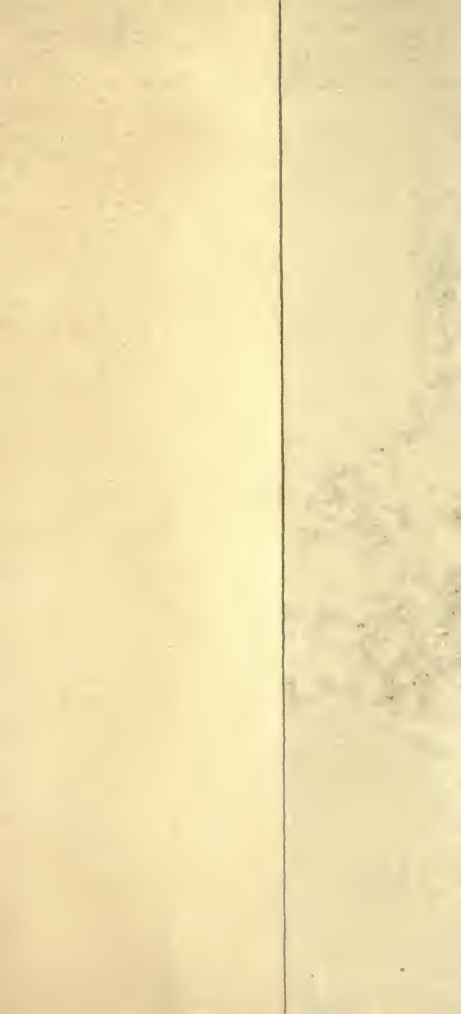
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CHRIS'MUS'
IS A' COMIN'
& OTHER POEMS

BY
Paul Laurence Dunbar





To

Ellie

With the Season's Greetings
From

Ellie

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'
AND OTHER POEMS



CHRIS'MUS'
IS A' COMIN'
& OTHER POEMS

BY
Paul Laurence Dunbar


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CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'
AND OTHER POEMS

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CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

ONES a-gittin' achy,
Back a-feelin' col',
Han's a-growin'
shaky,
Jes' lak I was ol'.

Fros' erpon de meddah
Lookin' mighty white;
Snowdraps lak a feddah
Slippin' down at night.
Jes' keep t'ings a-hummin'
Spite o' fros' an' showahs,
Chrismus is a-comin'
An' all de week is ouahs.

Little mas' a-axin',
"Who is Santy Claus?"
Meks it kin' o' taxin'
Not to brek de laws.
Chillun's pow'ful tryin'
To a pusson's grace
W'en dey go a pryin'
Right on th'oo you' face
Down ermong yo' feelin's;
Jes' 'pears lak dat you

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Got to change you' dealin's
So 's to tell 'em true.

An' my pickaninny —
Dreamin' in his sleep!
Come hyeah, Mammy Jinny,
Come an' tek a peep.
Ol' Mas' Bob an' Missis
In de house up daih
Got no chile lak dis is,
D' ain't none anywhaih.
Sleep, my little lammy,
Sleep, you little limb,
He do' know whut mammy
Done saved up fu' him.

Dey'll be banjo pickin',
Dancin' all night thoo.
Dey'll be lots o' chicken,
Plenty tukky, too.
Drams to wet yo' whistles
So's to drive out chills.
Whut I keer fu' drizzles
Fallin' on de hills?
Jes' keep t'ings a-hummin'
Spite o' col' an' showahs,
Chrismus day's a-comin',
An' all de week is ouahs.

LULLABY

BEDTIME'S come fu' little boys.
Po' little lamb.

Too tiahed out to make a noise,
Po' little lamb.

You gwine t' have to-morrer
sho'?

Yes, you tole me dat befo',
Don't you fool me, chile, no mo',
Po' little lamb.

You been bad de livelong day,
Po' little lamb.

Th'owin' stones an' runnin'
'way,
Po' little lamb.

My, but you's a-runnin' wil',
Look jes' lak some po' folks
chile;

Mam' gwine whup you atter
while,
Po' little lamb.

Come hyeah! you mos' tiahed
to def,
Po' little lamb.

Played yo'se'f clean out o' bref,
Po' little lamb.

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

See dem han's now—sich a
sight!

Would you evah b'lieve dey's
white?

Stan' still twell I wash 'em right,
Po' little lamb.

Jes' cain't hol' yo' haid up
straight,

Po' little lamb.

Hadn't oughter played so late,
Po' little lamb.

Mammy do' know whut she'd
do,

Ef de chillun's all lak you;

You's a caution now fu' true,
Po' little lamb.

Lay yo' haid down in my lap,
Po' little lamb.

Y' ought to have a right good
slap,

Po' little lamb.

You been runnin' roun' a heap.
Shet dem eyes an' don't you
peep,

Dah now, dah now, go to sleep,
Po' little lamb.

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

AT CANDLE-LIGHTIN'
TIME

WHEN I come in f'om de co'n-
fiel' aftah wo'kin' ha'd all day,
It's amazin' nice to fin' my suppah
all erpon de way ;
An' it's nice to smell de coffee
bubblin' ovah in de pot,
An' it's fine to see de meat
a-sizzlin' teasin'-lak an' hot.

But when suppah-time is ovah,
an' de t'ings is cleahed away ;
Den de happy hours dat foller
are de sweetes' of de day.
When my co'ncob pipe is sta'ted,
an' de smoke is drawin' prime,
My ole 'ooman says, " I reckon,
Ike, it's candle-lightin' time."

Den de chillun snuggle up to me,
an' all commence to call,
" Oh, say, daddy, now it's time
to mek de shadders on de
wall."

So I puts my han's togethah—
evah daddy knows de way,—

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

An' de chillun snuggle closer
roun' ez I begin to say: —

“Fus' thing, hyeah come Mistah
Rabbit; don' you see him
wo'k his eahs?

Huh, uh! dis mus' be a donkey,
—look, how innercent he
'pears!

Dah's de ole black swan a-
swimmin' — ain't she got a'
awful neck?

Who's dis feller dat's a-comin'?
Why, dat's ole dog Tray, I
'spec'!

Dat's de way I run on, tryin' fu'
to please 'em all I can;

Den I hollahs, “Now be keer-
ful—dis hyeah las' 's de buga-
man!”

An' dey runs an' hides dey faces;
dey ain't skeered—dey's lettin'
on:

But de play ain't raaly ovah
twell dat bugaman is gone.

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

So I jes' teks up my banjo, an'
I plays a little chune,
An' you see dem haid's come
peepin' out to listen mighty
soon.

Den my wife says, "Sich a
pappy fu' to give you sich a
fright!

Jes' you go to baid, an' leave
him: say yo' prayers an' say
good-night."

THE DESERTED PLANTA- TION

Oh, de grubbin'-hoe's a-rustin'
in de co'nah,

An' de plow's a-tumblin' down
in de fiel',

While de whippo'will's a-wailin'
lak a mou'nah

When his stubbo'n hea't is
tryin' ha'd to yiel'.

In de furrers whah de co'n was
allus wavin',

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Now de weeds is growin'
green an' rank an' tall ;
An' de swallers roun' de whole
place is a-bravin'
Lak dey thought deir folks had
allus owned it all.

An' de big house stan's all quiet
lak an' solemn,
Not a blessed soul in pa'lor,
po'ch, er lawn ;
Not a guest, ner not a ca'iage
lef' to haul 'em
Fu' de ones dat tu'ned de
latch-string out air gone.

An' de banjo's voice is silent in
de qua'ters,
D' ain't a hymn ner co'n-song
ringin' in de air ;
But de murmur of a branch's
passin' waters
Is de only soun' dat breks de
stillness dere.

Whah's de da'kies, dem dat used
to be a-dancin'

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Ev'ry night befo' de ole cabin
do' ?

Whah's de chillun, dem dat used
to be a-prancin'

Er a-rollin' in de san' er on de
flo' ?

Whah's ole Uncle Mordecai an'
Uncle Aaron ?

Whah's Aunt Doshy, Sam, an'
Kit, an' all de res' ?

Whah's ole Tom de da'ky fiddlah,
how's he farin' ?

Whah's de gals dat used to
sing an' dance de bes' ?

Gone ! not one o' dem is lef' to
tell de story ;

Dey have lef' de deah ole place
to fall away.

Couldn't one o' dem dat seed
it in its glory

Stay to watch it in de hour of
decay ?

Dey have lef' de ole plantation
to de swallers,

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

But it hol's in me a lover till
de las' ;
Fu' I fin' hyeah in de memory
dat follers
All dat loved me an' dat I
loved in de pas'.

So I'll stay an' watch de deah ole
place an' tend it
Ez I used to in de happy days
gone by.
'Twell de othah Mastah thinks
it's time to end it,
An' calls me to my qua'ters in
de sky.

A BANJO SONG

Oh, dere's lots o' keer an'
trouble
In dis world to swaller
down ;
An' ol' Sorrer's purty lively
In her way o' gittin' roun'.
Yet dere's times when I furgit
'em,—

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Aches an' pains an' troubles
all,—

An' it's when I tek at ebenin'
My ol' banjo f'om de wall.

'Bout de time dat night is fallin'
An' my daily wu'k is done,
An' above de shady hilltops
I kin see de settin' sun ;
When de quiet, restful shadders
Is beginnin' jes' to fall,—
Den I take de little banjo
F'om its place upon de wall.

Den my fam'ly gadders roun'
me

In de fadin' o' de light,
Ez I strike de strings to try 'em
Ef dey all is tuned er-right.
An' it seems we're so nigh
heaben

We kin hyeah de angels sing
When de music o' dat banjo
Sets my cabin all er-ring.

An' my wife an' all de othahs,—
Male an' female, small an'
big,—

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Even up to gray-haired granny,
Seem jes' boun' to do a jig;
'Twell I change de style o'
music,
Change de movement an' de
time,
An' de ringin' little banjo
Plays an ol' hea't-feelin' hime.

An' somehow my th' oat gits
choky,
An' a lump keeps tryin' to rise
Lak it wan'ed to ketch de water
Dat was flowin' to my eyes;
An' I feel dat I could sorter
Knock de socks clean off o'
sin
Ez I hyeah my po' ol' granny
Wif huh tremblin' voice jine
in.

Den we all th'ow in our voices
Fu' to he'p de chune out too,
Lak a big camp-meetin' choiry
Tryin' to sing a mou'nah th'oo.
An' our th'oahts let out de music,
Sweet an' solemn, loud an'
free,

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

'Twell de raftahs o' my cabin
Echo wif de melody.

Oh, de music o' de banjo,
Quick an' deb'lish, solemn,
slow,
Is de greates' joy an' solace
Dat a weary slave kin know!
So jes' let me hyeah it ringin',
Dough de chune be po' an'
rough,
It's a pleasure; an' de pleasures
O' dis life is few enough.

Now, de blessed little angels
Up in heaben, we are told,
Don't do nothin' all dere life-
time
'Ceptin' play on ha'ps o' gold.
Now I think heaben'd be mo'
homelike
Ef we'd hyeah some music fall
F'om a real ol'-fashioned banjo,
Like dat one upon de wall.

WHEN DE CO'N PONE'S
HOT

DEY is times in life when Nature
Seems to slip a cog an' go,
Jes' a-rattlin' down creation,
Lak an ocean's overflow ;
When de worl' jes' stahts
a-spinnin'
Lak a picaninny's top,
An' yo' cup o' joy is brimmin'
'Twell it seems about to slop,
An' you feel jes' lak a racah,
Dat is trainin' fu' to trot—
When yo' mammy says de
blessin'
An' de co'n pone's hot.

When you set down at de table,
Kin' o' weary lak an' sad,
An' you 'se jes' a little tiahed
An' purhaps a little mad ;
How yo' gloom tu'ns into glad-
ness,
How yo' joy drives out de
doubt
When de oven do' is open,

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

An' de smell comes po'in'
out;
Why, de 'lectric light o' Heaven
Seems to settle on de spot,
When yo' mammy says de
blessin'
An' de co'n pone's hot.

When de cabbage pot is
steamin'
An' de bacon good an' fat,
When de chittlins is a-sputter'n'
So's to show you whah dey's
at;
Tek away yo' sody biscuit,
Tek away yo' cake an' pie,
Fu' de glory time is comin',
An' it's 'proachin' mighty
nigh,
An' you want to jump an' hollah,
Dough you know you'd bettah
not,
When yo' mammy says de
blessin',
An' de co'n pone's hot.

I have hyeahd o' lots o' sermons,

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

An' I've hyeahd o' lots o'
prayers,
An' I've listened to some singin'
Dat has tuck me up de stairs
Of de Glory-Lan' an' set me
Jes' below de Mahstah's
th'one,
An' have lef' my hea't a-singin'
In a happy aftah tone ;
But dem wu'ds so sweetly mur-
mured
Seem to tech de softes' spot,
When my mammy says de
blessin',
An' de co'n pone's hot.

WHEN MALINDY SINGS

G'WAY an' quit dat noise, Miss
Lucy—
Put dat music book away ;
What's de use to keep on tryin' ?
Ef you practise twell you're
gray,
You cain't sta't no notes a-flyin'

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Lak de ones dat rants and
rings
F'om de kitchen to de big
woods
When Malindy sings.

You ain't got de nachel o'gans
Fu' to make de soun' come
right,
You ain't got de tu'ns an'
twistin's
Fu' to make it sweet an' light.
Tell you one thing now, Miss
Lucy,
An' I'm tellin' you fu' true,
When hit comes to raal right
singin',
'Tain't no easy thing to do.

Easy 'nough fu' folks to hollah,
Lookin' at de lines an' dots,
When dey ain't no one kin sence
it,
An' de chune comes in, in
spots ;
But fu' real melojous music,
Dat jes' strikes yo' hea't and
clings,

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Jes' you stan' an' listen wif me
When Malindy sings.

Ain't you nevah hyeahd Ma-
lindy?

Blessed soul, tek up de cross!
Look hyeah, ain't you jokin',
honey?

Well, you don't know whut
you los'.

Y' ought to hyeah dat gal
a-wa'blin',

Robins, la'ks, an' all dem
things,

Heish dey moufs an' hides dey
faces

When Malindy sings.

Fiddlin' man jes' stop his fid-
dlin',

Lay his fiddle on de she'f;
Mockin'-bird quit tryin' to whis-
tle,

'Cause he jes' so shamed his-
se'f.

Folks a-playin' on de banjo

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Draps dey fingahs on de
strings —
Bless yo' soul—fu'gits to move
'em,
When Malindy signs.

She jes' spreads huh mouf and
hollahs,
“Come to Jesus,” twell you
hyeah
Sinnahs' tremblin' steps and
voices,
Timid-lak a-drawin' neah;
Den she tu'ns to “Rock of
Ages,”
Simply to de cross she clings,
An' you fin' yo' teahs a-drap-
pin',
When Malindy sings.

Who dat says dat humble praises
Wif de Master nevah counts?
Heish yo' mouf, I hyeah dat
music,
Ez hit rises up an' mounts —
Floatin' by de hills an' valleys,
Way above dis buryin' sod,

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Ez hit makes its way in glory
To de very gates of God !

Oh, hit's sweetah dan de music
Of an edicated band ;
An' hit's dearah dan de battle's
Song o' triumph in de lan'.
It seems holier dan evenin'
When de solemn chu'ch bell
rings,
Ez I sit an' ca'mly listen
While Malindy sings.

Towsah, stop dat ba'kin', hyeah
me !
Mandy, mek dat chile keep
still ;
Don't you hyeah de echoes
callin'
F'om de valley to de hill ?
Let me listen, I can hyeah it,
Th'oo de bresh of angel's
wings,
Sof' an' sweet, " Swing Low,
Sweet Chariot,"
Ez Malindy sings.

SONG OF SUMMER

Dis is gospel weathah sho'—
Hills is sawt o' hazy.
Meddahs level ez a flo'
Callin' to de lazy.
Sky all white wif streaks o' blue,
Sunshine softly gleamin',
D'ain't no wuk hit's right to do,
Nothin' 's right but dreamin'.

Dreamin' by de rivah side
Wif de watahs glist'nin',
Feelin' good an' satisfied
Ez you lay a-list'nin'
To the little nakid boys
Splashin' in de watah,
Hollerin' fu' to spress deir joys
Jes' lak youngsters ought to.

Squir'l a-tippin' on his toes,
So's to hide an' view you ;
Whole flocks o' camp-meetin'
crows
Shoutin' hallelujah.
Peckahwood erpon de tree
Tappin' lak a hammah ;

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Jaybird chattin' wif a bee,
Tryin' to teach him grammah.

Breeze is blowin' wif perfume
Jes' enough to tease you ;
Hollyhocks is all in bloom,
Smellin' fu' to please you.
Go 'way, folks, an' let me 'lone,
Times is gettin' dearah —
Summah's settin' on de th'one,
An' I'm a-layin' neah huh !

LI'L' GAL

Oh, de weathah it is balmy an'
de breeze is sighin low.
Li'l' gal,
An' de mockin' bird is singin'
in de locus' by de do',
Li'l' gal ;
Dere's a hummin' an' a bummin'
in de lan' f'om eas' to
wes',
I's a-sighin' fu' you, honey, an'
I nevah know no res'.

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Fu' dey's lots o' trouble brewin'
an' a-stewin' in my breas',
Li'l' gal.

Whut's de mattah wid de
weathah, whut's de mat-
tah wid de breeze,
Li'l' gal?

Whut's de mattah wid de locus'
dat's a-singin' in de trees,
Li'l' gal?

W'y dey knows dey ladies love
'em, an' dey knows dey
love 'em true,
An' dey love 'em back, I reckon,
des' lak I's a-lovin' you;
Dat's de reason dey's a-weavin'
an' a-sighin', thoo an'
thoo,
Li'l' gal.

Don't you let no da'ky fool you
'cause de clo'es he waihs
is fine,
Li'l' gal.

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Dey's a hones' hea't a-beatin'
unnerneaf dese rags o'
mine,

Li'l' gal.

C'ose dey ain' no use in mockin'
whut de birds an' weathah
do,

But I's so'y I cain't 'spress it
w'en I knows I loves
you true,

Dat's de reason I's a-sighin' an'
a-singin' now fu' you,
Li'l' gal.

FISHING

W'EN I git up in de mo'nin' an'
de clouds is big an'
black,

Dey's a kin' o' wa'nin' shivah
goes a-scootin' down my
back ;

Den I says to my ol' ooman ez
I watches down de lane,

“ Don't you so't o' reckon,
Lizy, dat we gwine to
have some rain ? ”

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

"Go on, man," my Lizy an-
swah, "you cain't fool
me, not a bit,
I don't see no rain a-comin', ef
you's wishin' fu' it, quit;
Case de mo' you t'ink erbout
it, an' de mo' you pray
an' wish,
W'y de rain stay 'way de longah,
spechul ef you wants to
fish."

But I see huh pat de skillet, an'
I see huh cas' huh eye
Wid a kin' o' anxious motion
to'ds de da'kness in de
sky;
An' I knows whut she's
a-t'inkin', dough she
tries so ha'd to hide.
She's a-sayin', "Wouldn't cat-
fish now tas'e monst'ous
bully, fried?"

Den de clouds git black an'
blackah, an' de thundah
'mence to roll,

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

An' de rain, it 'mence a-fallin'.
Oh, I's happy, bless my
soul!

Ez I look at dat ol' skillet, an' I
'magine I kin see
Jes' a slew o' new-ketched cat-
fish sizzlin' daih fu' huh
an' me.

'Tain't no use to go a-ploughin',
fu' de groun'll be too wet,
So I puts out fu' de big house
at a moughty pace, you
bet,

An' ol' mastah say, "Well,
Lishy, ef you t'ink hit's
gwine to rain,
Go on fishin', hit's de weathah,
an' I 'low we cain't com-
plain."

Talk erbout a dahky walkin'
wid his haid up in de
aih!

Have to feel mine evah minute
to be sho' I got it daih;
En' de win' is cuttin' capahs an'
a-lashin' thoo de trees,

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

But de rain keeps on a-singin'
blessed songs, lak "Tek
yo' ease."

Wid my pole erpon my shouldah
an' my wo'm can in my
han',

I kin feel de fish a-waitin' w'en
I strikes de rivah's san';
Nevah min' you ho'ny scoun'-
els, needn' swim erroun'
an' grin,

I'll be grinnin' in a minute w'en
I 'mence to haul you in.

W'en de fish begin to nibble,
an' de co'k begin to
jump,

I's erfeahed dat dey'll quit bitin',
case dey hyeah my hea't
go "thump,"

'Twell de co'k go way down
undah, an' I raise a awful
shout,

Ez a big ol' yallah belly comes
a gallivantin' out.

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Needn't wriggle, Mistah Cat-
fish, case I got you jes'
de same,

You been eatin', I'll be eatin',
an' we needah ain't to
blame.

But you needn't feel so lone-
some fu' I's th'owin' out
to see

Ef dey ain't some of yo' com-
rades fu' to keep you
company.

Spo't, dis fishin'! now you
talkin', w'y dey ain't no
kin' to beat;

I don' keer ef I is soakin', laigs,
an' back, an' naik, an'
feet,

It's de spo't I's lookin' aftah.
Hit's de pleasure an' de
fun,

Dough I knows dat Lizy's
waitin' wid de skillet
w'en I's done.

TWO LITTLE BOOTS

Two little boots all rough an'
wo',

Two little boots !

Laws, I've kissed 'em times
befo',

Dese little boots !

Seems de toes a-peepin' thoo

Dis hyeah hole an' sayin'
" Boo ! "

Evah time dey looks at you —
Dese little boots.

Membah de time he put 'em on,
Dese little boots ;

Riz an' called fu' 'em by dawn,
Dese little boots ;

Den he tromped de livelong
day,

Laffin' in his happy way,

Evaht'ing he had to say,
" My little boots ! "

Kickin' de san' de whole day
long,

Dem little boots ;

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Good de cobblah made 'em
strong,
Dem little boots !
Rocks was fu' dat baby's use,
I'on had to stan' abuse
W'en you tu'ned dese cham-
peens loose,
Dese little boots !

Ust to make de ol' cat cry,
Dese little boots ;
Den you walked it mighty high,
Proud little boots !
Ahms akimbo, stan'in' wide,
Eyes a-sayin' " Dis is pride ! "
Den de manny-baby stride !
You little boots.

Somehow, you don't seem so
gay,
Po' little boots,
Sence yo' ownah went erway,
Po' little boots !
Yo' bright tops don't look so
red,
Dese brass tips is dull an' dead ;
" Goo'-bye," whut de baby said ;
Deah little boots !

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Ain't you kin' o' sad yo'se'f,
 You little boots?
Dis is all his manny's lef',
 Two little boots.
Sence huh baby gone an' died,
Heav'n itse'f hit seem to hide
Des a little bit inside
 Two little boots.

DAT OL' MARE O' MINE

Want to trade me, do you, mis-
 tah? Oh, well, now, I
 reckon not,
W'y, you couldn't buy my Sukey
 fu' a thousan' on de spot.
 Dat ol' mare o' mine?
Yes, huh coat ah long an'
 shaggy, an' she ain't no
 shakes to see;
Dat's a ring-bone, yes, you right,
 suh, an' she got a on'ry
 knee,

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

But dey ain't no use in talkin',
she de only hoss fu' me,
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

Co'se, I knows dat Suke's con-
tra'y, an' she moughty
ap' to vex ;

But you got to mek erlowance
fu' de nature of huh sex ;
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

Ef you pull her on de lef' han' ;
she plum 'terminated to go
right,

A cannon couldn't skeer huh,
but she boun' to tek a
fright

At a piece o' common paper, or
anyt'ing whut's white,
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

W'en my eyes commence to
fail me, dough, I trus'es
to huh sight,

An' she'll tote me safe an' hones'
on de ve'y da'kes' night,
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Ef I whup huh, she jes' switch
huh tail, an' settle to a
walk,

Ef I whup huh mo', she shek
huh haid, an' lak ez not,
she balk.

But huh sense ain't no ways
lackin', she do evah t'ing
but talk,

Dat ol' mare o' mine.

But she gentle ez a lady w'en
she know huh beau kin
see,

An' she sholy got mo' gumption
any day den you or me,
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

She's a leetle slow a-goin', an'
she moughty ha'd to
sta't,

But we's gittin' ol' togathah,
an' she's closah to my
hea't,

An' I doesn't reckon, mistah,
dat she'd sca'cely keer
to pa't;

Dat ol' mare o' mine.

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

W'y I knows de time dat cidah's
kin' o' muddled up my
haid,

Ef it hadn't been fu' Sukey
hyeah, I reckon I'd been
daid ;

Dat ol' mare o' mine.

But she got me in de middle o'
de road an' tuk me home,
An' she wouldn't let me wan-
dah, ner she wouldn't let
me roam,

Dat's de kin' o' hoss to tie to
w'en you's seed de cidah's
foam,

Dat ol' mare o' mine.

You kin talk erbout yo' heaven,
you kin talk erbout yo'
hell,

Dey is people, dey is hosses, den
dey's cattle, den dey's—
well —

Dat ol' mare o' mine ;

She de beatenes' t'ing dat evah
struck de medders o' de
town,

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

An' aldough huh haid ain't fittin'
fu' to waih no golden
crown,
D' ain't a blessed way fu' Petah
fu' to tu'n my Sukey
down,
Dat ol' mare o' mine.

WHEN DEY 'LISTED COLORED SOLDIERS

DEY was talkin' in de cabin,
dey was talkin' in de
hall;
But I listened kin' o' keerless,
not a-t'inkin' 'bout it all;
An' on Sunday, too, I noticed,
dey was whisp'rin'
mighty much,
Stan'in' all erroun' de roadside
w'en dey let us out o'
chu'ch.
But I didn't t'ink erbout it twell
de middle of de week,

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

An' my 'Lias come to see me,
an' somehow he couldn't
speak.

Den I seed all in a minute whut
he'd come to see me
for ;—

Dey had 'listed colo'ed sojers,
an' my 'Lias gwine to
wah.

Oh, I hugged him, an' I kissed
him, an' I baiged him not
to go ;

But he tol' me dat his con-
science, hit was callin'
to him so,

An' he couldn't baih to lingah
w'en he had a chanst to
fight

For de freedom dey had gin him
an' de glory of de right.

So he kissed me, an' he lef'
me, w'en I'd p'omised
to be true ;

An' dey put a knapsack on him,
an' a coat all colo'ed
blue.

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

So I gin him pap's ol' Bible
f'om de bottom of de
draw', —

W'en dey 'listed colo'ed sojers
an' my 'Lias went to wah.

But I t'ought of all de weary
miles dat he would have
to tramp,

An' I couldn't be contented
w'en dey tuk him to de
camp.

W'y my hea't nigh broke wid
grievin' 'twell I seed him
on de street;

Den I felt lak I could go an'
th'ow my body at his
feet.

For his buttons was a-shinin',
an' his face was shinin',
too,

An' he looked so strong an'
mighty in his coat o' sojer
blue,

Dat I hollahed, "Step up,
manny," dough my th'oat
was so' an' raw—

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

W'en dey 'listed colo'ed sojers
an' my 'Lias went to wah.

Ol' Mis' cried w'en mastah lef'
huh, young Miss
mou'ned huh brothah
Ned,

An' I didn't know dey feelin's
is de ve'y wo'ds dey
said

W'en I tol' 'em I was so'y.
Dey had done gin up
dey all ;

But dey only seemed mo'
proudah dat dey men had
hyeahd de call.

Bofe my mastahs went in gray
suits, an' I loved de Yan-
kee blue,

But I t'ought dat I could sor-
rer for de losin' of 'em
too ;

But I couldn't, for I didn't know
de ha'f o' whut I saw,

'Twell dey 'listed colo'ed so-
jers an' my 'Lias went
to wah.

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

Mastah Jack come home all
sickly; he was broke for
life, dey said;

An' dey lef' my po' young mas-
tah some'r's on de road-
side,—dead.

W'en de women cried an'
mou'ned 'em, I could
feel it thoo an' thoo,

For I had a loved un fightin' in
de way o' dangah, too.

Den dey tol' me dey had laid
him some'r's way down
souf to res',

Wid de flag dat he had fit for
shinin' daih acrost his
breas'.

Well, I cried, but den I reckon
dat's whut Gawd had
called him for,

W'en dey 'listed colo'ed sojers
an' my 'Lias went to wah.

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

DE WAY T'INGS COME

DE way t'ings come, hit seems
to me,
Is des' one monst'ous mystery ;
De way hit seem to strike a
man,
Dey ain't no sense, dey ain't no
plan ;
Ef trouble sta'ts a-pilin' down,
It ain't no use to rage er frown,
It ain't no use to strive er pray,
Hit's mortal boun' to come dat
way.

Now, ef you's hongry, an' yo'
plate
Des' keep on sayin' to you,
" Wait,"
Don't mek no diffunce how you
feel,
'Twon't do no good to hunt a
meal,
Fu' dat ah meal des' boun' to
hide
Ontwell de devil's satisfied,

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

An' 'twell dey's some'p'n by to
cyave
You's got to ease yo'se'f an'
sta've.

But ef dey's co'n meal on de
she'f
You needn't bothah 'roun' yo'-
se'f,
Somebody's boun' to amble in
An' 'vite you to dey co'n meal
bin ;
An' ef you's stuffed up to de
froat
Wid co'n er middlin', fowl er
shoat,
Des' look out an' you'll see fu'
sho
A 'possum faint befo' yo' do'.

De way t'ings happen, huhuh,
chile,
Dis worl' 's done puzzled me
one w'ile ;
I's mighty skeered I'll fall in
doubt,
I des' won't try to reason out

CHRISMUS IS A-COMIN'

De reason why folks strive an'
plan
A dinnah fu' a full-fed man,
An' shet de do' an' cross de
street
F'om one dat raaly needs to eat.

